

**Psychological Trauma and Identity Crisis in the Time of War in V.V. Ganeshanathan's
Novel Brotherless Night**

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Abstract

The researcher examines how war affects the identities and mental health of individuals in the novel *Brotherless Night* (2024) by V.V. Ganeshanathan. Tamil minorities were treated as terrorists, and they were also killed and suffering at the hands of both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. The LTTE treated Tamils as if their lives had no value. The main objective of the research is to find how this behavior from both sides leads to trauma and identity crisis in Tamil civilians. The text of the novel serves as the primary data collection source. We use Cathy Caruth's trauma theory to explore trauma and identity in the character of Sashi and many other Tamil civilians. This study is qualitative in design and descriptive in nature; a textual analysis approach is used to explore trauma and identity destruction in Sashi's character after losing his brother in war, including her love K. This research leaves open the intellectual space to explore feminism in V.V. Ganeshanathan's novel *Brotherless Night*. (2024).

Keywords: LTTE, Trauma, PTSD, Sashi, Sri Lankan Government

Introduction

Older men declare war, but it is youth that must fight and die." This is one of the most famous sayings of Herbert Hoover, who was the 31st Prime Minister of the United States. And we can see the reality of this saying all over the world. The person who initiated the war sat back and watched as others suffered and died. This war not only inflicts physical harm on individuals, but it also causes psychological distress. Either it is a war between two countries or between a single country, where citizens of the same country come with different perspectives and interests. A war that is known as a civil war hurt people more. There are many countries—like Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Myanmar, and many others—that encounter this type of war. Sri Lanka was one of them. It was a war between the Tamil minority and the Sinhalese majority that left deep marks on the lives of Tamil civilians in Sri Lanka. While the British ruled, Tamil people were in power, and their language was considered the official language, but later, when they left, Sinhalese people were in the majority, and they started ruling over the country. Sinhalese becomes the official government language. Tamil minorities start protesting against them and their rules. And all those Protestants start going missing, which causes a war between two communities in Sri Lanka. Some people can't travel, but literature is one of the best ways to see the world. There is a lot of literature about wars and their effect on the lives of individuals and communities. There are a number of authors from all over the world who write about themes of psychological trauma and identity crisis due to the war. The writer describes these themes in poems, short stories, and novels.

V. V. Ganeshanathan is one of those who contributes to literature to explore the themes of trauma and identity crises. She is one of the best American authors with noticeable writing skills. She was born in 1980 in New York City, United States, while her forefathers belong to Sri Lanka. She is an American fiction writer, essayist, journalist, and also co-host of a fiction/non-fiction podcast on Literary Hub. Her work has appeared in many leading newspapers and journals, including *Granta*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, and *The Washington Post*. She has also served as former vice president of

the South Asian Journalist Association. She is also a member of the board of directors of the American Institute for Sri-Lankan Studies and the Minnesota Person Writing Workshop. She teaches in an MFA program at the University of Minnesota. She wrote two long novels, *Love Marriage* and *Brotherless Night* (2024), and both have received prizes because of their historical depth and accuracy and heart-touching storylines. She is one of the authors who describe the Sri Lankan civil war with the most significant themes of loss, grief, identity issues, and mental health in the circumstances of war. The novel *Brotherless Night* (2024) has a storyline set in Sri Lanka between a family and a neighbor boy. K. Ganeshanathan depicts the themes of the psychological impact of war, exile and displacement, loss, resilience, conflict, and division. The novel deals with the conflict between the minority and majority of a single nation, Sri Lanka, that led to a war, suffering, and the cause of a large number of deaths. It is the story of how extremism grows and takes root on all sides of a political dialogue. It is the story of how the divide becomes larger and larger. Reading it at this moment in history magnifies the impact as these tragic words continue to resonate in conflicts around the world. The title itself depicts the central theme of the novel. *Brotherless Night* (2024) is a novel that describes trauma after the loss of brothers in the conflict. One of the most popular movements was the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, widely known as LTTE. This movement starts making trouble for their own people. It was not the only movement at that time. The Tamil Tigers kill all those boys who joined any other movement, starting to rob their own people of money, food, jewellery, and houses as well. That develops fear in Sri Lankan people. A fear of being killed by one's own fellows left other young boys in fear. The loss of brothers, sons, and friends had a profound impact on individuals and families. Not only LTTE but they were also being torture by Sri Lankan Government. Army's bomb attack on houses of Tamil people and also imprisons all the young boys from Jaffna without any explanation. That led all the mothers and sisters into grief, loss, helplessness, and anger. They all are alive or dead; this thought makes a psychological impact on all women's lives. In the absence of their beloved one, make them cope with the emotional trauma. This emotional destruction instills in them a mixed desire for justice, sorrow, and a fear of losing their way. This left marks on their lives. The main concept of traumatic ordeal was explored by Sigmund Freud in his theory of psychoanalysis. Psychology merges trauma. In the 1960s, trauma studies were separate, and in 1996, Cathy Caruth used the term trauma theory for the first time in his book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. According to Caruth, trauma is a wound hidden within the deepest recesses of the unconscious, and its level of harm cannot be assessed by the conscious mind. (Caruth, 1995) A wound encompasses both physical and mental harm. And a mental wound will be with the person for a lifetime. Cathy said any horrible incident of life will have effects on someone's mental health later, not at that time. These effects manifest in various ways, such as a shift in one's perspective on life, feelings of insecurity, guilt, and grief. They can also haunt a person in various ways, such as through nightmares, anxiety, stress, fear, memory loss, self-blame, guilt, and many other mental states. The worst form of all these situations can force a man to kill himself. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is a term used for all these conditions. It's a severe anxiety disorder that occurs after facing any traumatic incident; it may belong to anyone's childhood or be due to any other social circumstances. One of the issues associated with these traumas is the mental chaos that war causes. V. V. Ganeshanathan is one who understated the bitterness and cruelty of war. She is one of the famous writers due to her interpretation of trauma and identity destruction in her novel's characters. In her novel, *Brotherless Night* (2024), she delves into the psychological issues stemming from trauma and identity destruction, which are a result of the ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka. From 1983 to 2009, Sri Lanka recorded a civil war between its two communities. The government aligned itself with one of the majority communities, which had a significant impact on the lives of the Tamil population.

Brotherless Night (2024) is a story of a young girl, Sashi, living in the Sri Lankan village of Jaffna with the dream of becoming a doctor. When we see the character of Sashi, we can get the full saying of Cathy's trauma in her. Her way of life changed after the civil war; her dream of becoming a doctor started fading due to losses in her life. It was their own place, their own country, where they left all life and their home too. They destroy their identity. Their fear of death transforms them into an entirely new person. At that time, the LTTE was in power. And in order to break the other entire Tamil militant group, they start killing them. The boys who grew up with them were being killed by their own fellows and friends. Due to all these war circumstances, everyone was suffering. Either they were children, men, women, or young boys.

Problem Statement

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is more closely connected with the identity destruction and fear of being in war and losing due to war. Fear, loss, and guilt are essential components of PTSD. V. V. Ganeshanathan's novel Brotherless Night (2024) is a representation of PTSD. This study examines PTSD and identity crisis through the lens of a war situation, where individuals find themselves trapped in their own environment. War challenges, along with unequal behavior, make them suffer, leading to the character's mental health issues, including trauma and PTSD.

Significance of the study

Examining the novel Brotherless Night (2024) via the perspective of PTSD enhances our comprehension of the backdrop and its impact on individuals during wartime adversities. War has inflicted imperceptible scars on the human body. PTSD renders these manifestations apparent. Examining PTSD within the realms of literature and history provides an opportunity to comprehend psychological traumas more comprehensively through their discourse and dialogues.

Research Questions

- How civil wars of Sri Lanka destroy identity and effect mental health of individual in Brotherless Night (2024)?
- To what extent did India Peace Keeping Force entering in Sri Lanka effect Tamil people in Ganeshanathan's novel Brotherless Night (2024)?
- How does grief and loss of her brother's death effect on Sashi's life and mental health along with war of 1983 depicted in chosen text?

Research Objectives

1. To explore how civil wars of Sri Lanka destroy identity and effect on mental health of individual in Brotherless Night (2024).
2. To evaluate how Indian Peace Keeping Force Affects Sri Lankan Tamil people in Ganeshanathan's Brotherless Night (2024).
3. To explore how grief and loss of brother's death effect on Sashi's life and mental heat along with war of 1983 depicted in chosen text.

Literature Review

Brotherless Night (2024) is one of the best novels due to its style, storyline, and themes. A lot of readers felt pleasure after reading it, as it beautifully captures the complexities of human relationships and the struggles of personal identity. The author's evocative prose and richly developed characters leave a lasting impression, making it a compelling read that resonates. It was also a New York Times Editor's Choice novel, further solidifying its place in contemporary literature. With its intricate plot twists and thought-provoking insights, Brotherless Night

challenges readers to reflect on their own lives while being deeply engrossed in its narrative. Many critics gave opinions on this novel. Omar El Akkad wrote in 2023 in the *New York Times* about a general terrorist—to whom? The novel *Brotherless Night* (2024) is not about terrorism or terrorists; rather, it explores the complexities of human nature. It's a story of "real moments in a real war, real bloodshed," and about the "day-to-day life" portrayal of the people stuck in the violence and terrorism. Despite their status as victims, everyone labels them as terrorists. The story accurately depicts the event, despite the community's disregard for the killing of civilians who were on the right side of the conflict. In a research article by Aamer Shaheen, Muhammad Salman, and Sadia Qamar entitled *Ganeshanathan's Brotherless Night (2024): A Fictive Site to Recount Evisceration of Human Rights during the Sri Lankan Civil War (2024)*. This paper talks about human rights violations during the Sri Lankan Civil War. The paper uses the main character, Sashi, as the center of the study to explore the marginalization of Tamils and the abduction of basic human rights. The study opens up the role of the Sri Lankan state and army in the civil war against Tamils. This study talks about how the LTTE, military, and IPKF similarly contribute to violations of human rights. All the boys who were supposed to be surgeons, engineers, or successful in any other field became terrorists or were being killed by their own countrymen. Officers from India, who had come to establish peace in the area, were raping and robbing the young girls. From bombing to looting, Tamils face all cruelty from both sides of the conflict. There was not only a human rights violation but also a forceful displacement. LTTE forced them to leave their houses, and the military forced them to leave the country. Tamil people lost their freedom. LTTE forced young boys to join the movement, and the military imprisoned them without their mothers. The military called these boys terrorists. The study aims to shed light on the violations of civilians' rights in Sri Lanka; throughout the novel, human rights continue to be violated, even after the war ends, as the state continues to ignore the deaths of civilians during the civil war. Ganeshanathan likewise presents the war circumstances and their effect on the civilians. An article entitled *Manifestation of Psychological trauma in Broken Verses* by Kamila Shamsie (2023) by Amat ur Rehman Tehreem explores the psychological trauma by using Cathy Caruth's trauma theory. The article explores how a young child experiences trauma as a result of a political crisis. These incidents leave young children deeply traumatized. The story setting is the time period of the partition of the subcontinent, which affects almost two million people. One other main reason for this trauma is the loss of a mother's love. Aasmaani's mother suddenly disappeared, which left Aasmaani in grief. The main character herself was facing an identity crisis, as she wanted to start a new life but also wanted to find out about her mother's disappearance. She was a Pakistani activist. The story is replete with symptoms of PTSD, such as anger issues, feelings of helplessness, and a sense of betrayal. Cathy Caruth's trauma theory explores how mistrust of others, particularly towards male figures, and difficulties in forming meaningful relationships reflect the symptoms of PTSD. This theory highlights how unresolved trauma can lead to a pervasive sense of distrust, complicating the protagonist's efforts to connect with others while she navigates her own past. As she grapples with her identity and the mystery surrounding her mother, these psychological challenges further intensify her struggle for clarity and belonging. "The novel's most disturbing observation of trauma, mental disassociation, and a broken body."

Fadhilah Salma Husna and Heri Kuswoyo, in their article entitled *The Portrayal of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder as Seen in the Main Character in the Women in the Window Novel (2022)*. This study contributes to understanding PTSD. The study focuses on Anna Fox, the main character, who lived in her home, isolated from society. The loss of her husband and daughter caused her to experience guilt, which in turn led to PTSD. The feeling of unsafe and guilt forces her to not leave the home. Consumption of alcohol and isolation are the causes of her headache, as she has a lot of thoughts in her mind. Her PTSD has caused her to experience mood swings, deep frustration, and a sense of hopelessness about her life. She even recalls all incidents of her daughter and husband's

car accident, as, due to PTSD, she was unable to forget the trauma that led her to that worse situation. As a result of PTSD, she quickly tired, got panic attacks, had a shortage of breath in public, and felt fearful and uncomfortable in her surroundings. She felt that communicating with her husband and daughter, an impactful mental situation, is hallucination. She even has nightmares and difficulty in sleeping. In her nightmare, the traumatic event repeated and never blurred for her memory. Through the character of Anna Fox, we can see the worst effects of PTSD. The character experiences fear, isolation, guilt, nightmares, a sense of death, panic, and even hallucinations.

Traumatic in Toni Morrison's *Beloved: An Analytical Study* by Dr. Neveen Samir in 2020 that uses trauma theory for exploring the character's deep analysis and past memories that haunt her. This exploration reveals how the past can intrude upon the present, distorting one's perception of reality and leading to a profound sense of disconnection from both oneself and the world around them. Samir's study highlights the importance of confronting these memories in order to begin the healing process, illustrating the complex interplay between trauma and identity. The main character, Sethe, was subjected to physical and mental slavery as a result of her sexual orientation, leading her to sacrifice her own child, a decision that resulted in guilt and subsequent trauma. Sethe was running away from her guilt of being the murderer of her newborn baby, who lived with them as a ghost and was also referred to as *Beloved*. She has no desire to return to the era of slavery, when she lacked the autonomy to make her own decisions. PTSD left her detached from the present and isolated. She harbours a fear of becoming a slave once more, which compels her to flee from her traumatic situation and feelings of guilt. Sethe's trauma manifests in a form of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She suffers from flashbacks, hyper-vigilance, and emotional numbing. Her mind constantly relives the horrors of her time in slavery, especially the violent experiences she faced. The psychological weight of these memories causes Sethe to isolate herself from others and retreat into a world of guilt and fear. Dr. Naveen also discusses the healing process for traumas and identity crises, emphasizing the importance of communicating with others. Talking to others about the traumatic situation in your life can lead to coming up with fear and threatening feelings. You can't forget anything, but talking can bring healing. Sethe's trauma and identity crisis were due to this unforgotten past; she was unable to overcome the slavery time period and the death of her child. Due to the impact of PTSD, her present is haunted by fear and memories from her past.

Research methodology

This paper is a descriptive qualitative research study focused on the textual analysis of *Brotherless Night* by V. V. Ganeshanathan. The novel's text was the principal data source. Consequently, we have analyzed the text employing a descriptive research methodology. This study thoroughly examines the dialogues to identify PTSD and identity crises in the characters of the text. *Brotherless Night* also employs Cathy Caruth's 1996 work *Unclaimed Experience* to analyse trauma and PTSD. Cathy Caruth's work additionally functioned as a secondary source for analyzing identity difficulties in characters. Caruth's contributions to trauma theory offer a conceptual framework for analyzing characters' behaviors and dialogues, particularly with the psychological repercussions of trauma and the ensuing identity crises. This study applies trauma theory to analyse the text and examine identity transformations in the protagonist and supporting characters of *Brotherless Night* following various traumatic events. This research seeks to demonstrate how trauma affects the character's self-perception and moulds their individual and collective identity.

Result and Discussion

Brotherless Night is a poignant narrative depicting the plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka during the civil war, illustrating a period marked by extreme cruelty and misery for the Tamil population. The

protagonist of the tale is Sushi, a female medical student aspiring to become a physician. However, the Sri Lankan civil war obliterated her identity. Mob assaults transpired universally, while military conducted searches in every residence, resulting in the fatalities of Tamils. This marked the commencement of the conflict. Numerous sisters experience the loss of their brothers, including Sushi. This conflict occurred between the Sinhalese government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a movement initiated for the equitable rights of the Tamil community. In this conflict, the Tamils endured suffering from both factions. The LTTE, in support of their struggle against the government and in response to financial needs, commenced bank robberies targeting institutions where their compatriots deposit funds. "In March, five men perpetrated a bank robbery" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 07). This marked the inception of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). "Appa wrote and told Amma to take all of her jewellery from the bank" (P. 07). This was the predicament of Tamils, who feared their own compatriots. A movement initiated in their honor has begun to cause them difficulties. "Mother wishes to believe that all is well." All were optimistic that all would be well, although it was merely a deception. At that moment, all individuals were engulfed in panic. "Feeling threatened" is called anxiety; Freud called realistic anxiety a fear of tangible dangers in the external world, while neurotic anxiety arises from internal conflicts within the psyche. This distinction highlights the complexity of human emotions and the various factors that contribute to our sense of fear and apprehension. If we look deep into the novel, all Tamils were in a feeling of fear. They were afraid if LTTE stole their money, as described in the text of the novel. As the LTTE gained momentum, their irritation escalated to a level where they began to fear for their personal safety and their possessions. Sashi and her mother first experienced anxiety and fear when a bicycle rider shot a policeman. "Two men on bicycles, one of them shot a policeman in Jaffna town." On top of it all, Dayalan, one of Sashi's brothers, misplaced his bicycle (P. 16). "Dayalan's bicycle has disappeared" (P. 16). Sashi and her sibling suddenly feel helpless. After finding out about this incident, they were unable to tell their mother or father. When their mother heard on the radio about this news, they became more worried, and at the same time, their father came home. "He couldn't have ridden the bicycle. Some thief must have come and taken it" (P. 18). Sushi's mother's behavior shows how she is afraid of losing one of her sons. It's evident that she finds it difficult to trust her husband, even though he has been truthful about his son's absence. "I'm not hungry." (P. 17) Sushi's mother lost her appetite as well as her thirst. "I took Amma a cup of tea, but she would not drink it." (P. 19) The absence of one of the family members makes them all worried. Fear is something that is not an outer but an inner feeling. Sash and her mother experienced a sense of helplessness. They were unable to do anything; they could not even go outside to search for Dayalan. That was an incident they were unable to forget. Their dialogues and words show how much they love him and how much they were afraid of losing him. They were unable to sleep. This was the first time they had experienced such a situation, one that made them shudder. Finally, Dayalan returned home, only to discover that he had misplaced his bicycle, causing him immense sadness. Sashi's answer to Dayalan for the sadness of losing the bicycle shows her love for her brother. "It's you, my brother: you we can't lose" (P. 21). Every Tamil prioritized family, but their places of study and belonging were burned, leaving them powerless to defend themselves. "The Sinhalese policeman burnt our library" (P. 34). The reactions of all of them can show how much they love their places. "Dayalan went into his room and did not come out for many hours" (P. 35). Sashi himself sat in the courtyard and started staring at sunlight. They were all enduring the agony of defeat. "Upon hearing this news, one old scholar dropped dead" (P. 37). This incident shows how much Tamils used to love their places, which were burned in a sort of revenge. The impact of this loss was profound. This incident even changed their lifestyle. "No walk, no laughing exchanges on the lane, the joy drained from our days" (P. 37). They were all grappling with the trauma of loss, unaware that this incident had begun to shape their identities. As Cathy introduced the term "delayed responses" in her book

Unclaimed Experiences, published in 1996. She claimed that traumatic incidents show later effects on one's identity. Sashi and her siblings had forgotten to smile and chant, as they had done before the library burning incident. They were losing their real identity day by day after experiencing a traumatic incident. Tamil people were treated as terrorists not only in Jaffna but also in Colombo. The entire Tamil community was viewed as part of the LTTE movement, suspected of being involved in the killing of Sinhalese soldiers. Sashi was accompanying Niranjana on his medical study trip to Colombo when this incident occurred. This incident caused sudden fear in all Tamil civilians. Especially for those who also faced the anti-Tamil violence of 1958, when thousands of people were displaced from Sinhalese majority areas. Sashi's grandmother was one of them. Despite their advanced age, they could still vividly recall those traumatic incidents: "I am certain they will return." I remember what happened before. (P. 57) Ammamamah (a Tamil word used for grandmother) was recalling those past incidents with a feeling of horror that made him worried. "She went on, talking to me and herself, worrying" (P. 57). Tamils still bear the ancient scars of trauma. "Ammamah spoke faster and faster, her voice rising in horror" (P. 57). Her behavior still shows signs of PTSD. She never takes off her diamond earrings. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, widely known as PTSD, was more than a word for those who were suffering with this. "Trauma returns to haunt the survivor later on" (Caruth, 1996, p. 4). Tamils who faced the anti-Tamil violence of 1958 show the facts of PTSD. Despite the passing of 1958, the same condition resurfaced in 1983, causing further trauma. Trauma never goes anywhere but remains inside of humans. As a fact, those people are still suffering and cannot forget the fear and horror of the experience they encountered back in 1958.

Tamils were being caged in their own houses, as Sashi said, "Confused, lost in my own room" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 62), and as her brother left to find a way to get out of this house, she was alone with her grandmother. "Why would this brotherless night not pass?" (P. 62) She was suffering due to that war. "Sounds of screaming and protesting and our neighbor being beaten" (P. 63)—this was what was happening to Tamil people—the civilians of Sri Lanka being treated as terrorists and traitors. Nirnanjan had now vanished from sight. There was nothing remaining but only guilt: "I have never forgiven myself for letting him go" (P. 63). An incident left its mark for the whole of her life. And now there is only guilt, guilt of losing a beloved brother, and this guilt, time by time, starts getting into her nerves, as she wants to find her mistakes and to repair those mistakes. "What could I have done differently to travel once more with my brother?" (P. 68)

They were unable to record in writing how many days passed. Sashi, with her grandmother, came to the refugee camp, where she reported for her missing brother, "woke up drenched with fear" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 70). Sashi, accompanied by her grandmother and mother, was returning to Jaffna, a coastal town, however terror and shame rendered everything imperceptible and lifeless. "The trip has lasted days, yet I remember one prolonged, frigid night under the stars on the (P.n)" (P. 72). Upon her return to her hometown, she experienced feelings of sorrow and remorse for her solitude, absent her brother. "Nirnanjan is likely deceased; however, how shall we ascertain this?" On page 75, it is said that they are uncertain whether Deadas is deceased or alive in any hospital, medical camp, or similar facility. Numerous families were enduring this hardship. Numerous families experienced worry regarding the fate of their daughters. Ibrahim, the father of a friend of Sash Colombo, conveyed the news of Niradeath's demise, indicating that there were remnants of his body present. A sudden shame arose in Sashi during the prayer ceremony for his brother, who is now deceased. Upon encountering her half-sister, the prospective wife of her deceased brother, she experiences guilt, pondering, "Why did I allow Nirnanjan to depart?" She chastises herself for allowing him to depart. She was incapacitated from performing any actions due to this duty. Her medical examinations approached, although she found it challenging to grasp the book and breathe. "A planet where I did not desire to exist without my brother,"(P.81) Cathy employs the term "survivor guilt" (Caruth, 1996, p. 144) in her book to

elucidate the concept of trauma. A sentiment emerged regarding the loss of an individual who was dear to us. Grief is essentially synonymous with guilt. Guilt persists inside humans in various forms. Those individuals became disinterested in all matters, akin to Sashi's loss of interest. She felt betrayed, lonely, and sorrowful for allowing her brother to leave. It was not the conclusion. Sashi's two eldest brothers also departed, leaving them behind. All mothers were weeping for their sons who participated in the civil war. The army arrested the remaining sons of moms. Over time, conditions deteriorated, instilling fear in every mother regarding the departure of her boys; it was an era marked by agony and psychological isolation. "The boys I had known had disappeared" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 90), leaving only mothers with their anxieties. "Seelan and Dayalan are deceased" (P. 95). Sashi's older brother also departed to join the LTTE. Sashi and her mother departed in sorrow. The sorrow of losing two additional brothers impacts them. "I find it hard to believe. She consistently articulated, "The anguish of a mother bereaved of her son is incomprehensible." All Tamil mothers, whose sons were conscripted for their involvement in the agitation, endured identical sorrow. Both the LTTE and the government mourned Tamil mothers. They declare the verification process and request mothers to accompany their sons with evidence of Sri Lankan citizenship; nonetheless, "Every mother who brought her son to the army left her son with the army" (P. 104). That period was dreadful. "They apprehended all of them." All the males from the village were apprehended. The assertion "Every single one" (P. 104) is accurate. Only mothers persisted, their hearts burdened with sorrow for their sons. No mother possessed the authority to question about her son. The mother advocated for her son. The lads were liberated after some work, although it still had repercussions. Their fate is uncertain, and they "declined to discuss what transpired there" (P. 117). The war had shattered those youngsters. All families endure hardship, and the conflict between military and the LTTE imposes challenges on civilians. "My family was fragmented like an aged newspaper" (P. 120). Sashi's assertion illustrates the psychological impact of her fractured family on her mental well-being. This narrative encapsulated the experiences of every Tamil family residing in Sri Lanka at that period.

These people killed them and labelled them members of movements— "violence remains in our part of the country" (P. 128); everyone feels this. Turn a dead boy into a militant, and his death is excusable (p. 129). The government placed a high value on the lives of civilians, and in addition, they recommended that they leave by taking a holiday and visiting their families. P. 129) This was not a suggestion but a warning: If you leave, we will know for sure whose side you are on (P. 129), a warning that if you stay here, you will be killed by marking as a member of the movement. And they did this. They once again took the young boys and held them for two weeks, during which every one of them returned with a broken body part. Every time he came back, another piece of him was missing (P. 130). Soldiers who were considered their protectors were themselves making them suffer: "Every minute, I learnt a new way in which we could be hurt." It was the story of Sashi and all the Tamil sisters and mothers in Sri Lanka (P. 130). Soldiers, on the other hand, start a new way of threatening Tamil civilians. "Would begin to use rockets, bombs, and artillery against the militant" (P. 130), and everyone Tamil was aware of who they were referring to as the militant. Caruth contends that exposure to a threatening event causes trauma. This was the case with the Tamil civilians described in the text. Threats of death loomed over them. Many of the boys were also killed by the soldiers. These traumatic incidents made them suffer. One of the main reasons for any trauma is fear, and they were all afraid for their lives. The government and soldiers of their country, who were supposed to protect them, were killing them for an anti-Tamil society. As mentioned before, fear is a key element of any trauma and mental sickness.

"I am already alone." Sashi's statement revealed the extent of her distress caused by the movement and riots (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 134). Loss and grief over his elder brother's death, and later her two brothers left for the movement; one is still suffering with the investigation that breaks him too, and the other has disappeared entirely. Each day feels heavier, as memories of laughter and

shared moments haunt her, leaving her to grapple with a solitude that deepens with every passing moment. She was alone, struggling with all the loss and grief. She still blames herself for the death of Niranjana. She had a dream to become a doctor, but these incidents break her. She suddenly felt lonely and away from home. "I wish I could walk across the hall to talk to Aran" (P. 141), while she herself chose to live in a hostel after getting a seat in medical college. Now, every moment of her life is filled with memories of the missing person in her life, whether it's K, her brother, or her beloved sir. Her encouragement echoes her lament that "so many of the people I loved had walked away" (P. 141). These entire incidents left fear and trauma in her life: "Sir's assassination had lit an ember of dread inside me" (P. 141). Days later, the news of Dayalan's death (P. 191) tore Sashi apart once more; "Life yawned big, wide, and bleak, and another brother emptier." She was frustrated with Dayalan, but his absence left her unsure of whether she should be angry or not. Everyone was afraid. "Daily we were haunted, not by ghosts but by the malevolent, unavoidable present" (Brotherless Night, 2024, P.198); they were bound in their own country: "We were watched" (P. 199). At that time, she was also experiencing depression due to Dayalan's death, which prevented her from returning to her work. She described the four and a half months of listless depression that followed Dayalan's death (P. 212). Her suffering describes the suffering of all sisters of Tamil civilians. The cumulative terrible experiences of her life evoke such sentiment. Cathy's book presents the concept of delayed response to trauma, commonly referred to as PTSD or post-traumatic stress disorder, which significantly affects individuals. Grief and sentiments of loss are inherent to it. The cause of both emotions is the absence of her brothers. Believing himself to be the cause of one brother's demise and then losing two others in the civil war contributes to her mental illness. All emotions experienced by individuals following a stressful encounter are indicative of PTSD. She encounters difficulties in communicating with her spouse. Cathy asserts that Sashi's mental illness and pervasive feelings of loneliness, while being around others, are indicative of PTSD. Sashi's narrative articulates her emotions upon their loss. Sashi developed a fear of death due to these prior occurrences. Her demeanor was somewhat peculiar within the medical realm; the phrase "in the company of the people with whom I could not speak freely" (P. 144) illustrates her transformation. She shifts from being enthusiastic about attending medical college to a student who experiences discomfort in social interactions. Although she grieved for the men she had lost, she was reluctant to remain here, yet equally hesitant to depart. "I don't require anyone to safeguard me" (p. 151) illustrates her profound internal anguish, indicating her reluctance to depart from a deteriorating environment. In Sri Lanka, Tamils were uncertain of their identity; if they opposed LTTE regulations, they faced execution by government soldiers, while those who aligned with government forces were slaughtered by the LTTE. The scenario in Sri Lanka was as described. She feared death; she wished for no one else to perish, and she "wouldn't disclose another death akin to our teacher's" (P. 157). It illustrates her profound fear of the demise of her loved ones. She participates in the LTTE's field hospital, and her participation incurs a cost to her. She abruptly begins to lose her individuality and transform into a different girl. "I was becoming a person who remained silent," she stated, losing one of her pals due to her responsibilities at the field hospital. "I failed to attend an appointment with Chelvi; she did not extend another invitation for dinner" (P. 164). Field hospitals significantly influenced her life during a period when she confronted her own brother amidst violence. Witnessing her brother as the casualty of my explosion instilled in her a lack of dread. These encounters alleviated his phobia of medical situations. "Fear was not an option" (P. 165). Following the treatment of Seelan, she feared for his potential demise. She suddenly seated herself, experiencing internal discomfort. "I observed that he bore a resemblance to Niranjana" (P. 166), which caused her some discomfort. Notwithstanding her exam preparation, she discovered the medical campus to be markedly different from her prior experiences (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 166). She departed for medical school, however her thoughts remained on Dayalan. "His suffering lingered with me" (P. 167).

This incident exacerbates her suffering. She felt ensnared in Seelan: "I endeavored to listen, yet struggled to focus" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 167). "Seelan's visage intrusively reappeared in my mind's eye" (p. 168). In responding to Anjali Acca's inquiry regarding practical issues, she was unable to extricate herself from Seelan's distress and mindset. "I was concerned about the supra-orbital nerve beneath" (P. 168). She finds it challenging to remember all that she studied for the exam. The situation deteriorated due to the LTTE. "I passed by him—the boy, the body, the corpse—and had to feign ignorance," (P. 204), a catalyst for Sashi's identity dilemma. Following this episode, she experiences dreams in which she screams at the mother of the boy whose body she overlooked while returning home: "For three nights, something cried in the tree outside my window" (P. 204); this exacerbates her condition and the state of the country as well. In 1986, the government commanded the aerial detonation of bombs; at that moment, the populace erupted in screams and tears, with the lamentation of "little children of neighborhoods" (P. 206). The target house remained unknown; "a melodious chorus of fear ascended from the city" (P. 206). Everyone was enduring hardship. All individuals were confronting terror while being reassured that everything will be satisfactory; this was their existence—sustained by faith in falsehoods. Sashi was exhausted by it all; she preferred death to her current existence. "Allow me to perish in this desolation" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 208). In 1987, conditions deteriorated. Tamils were compelled to abandon their residences and seek asylum in temples or other camps, "the most sacred temple inundated with refugees" (P. 222). Individuals were experiencing food scarcity. Indian military deploy to Sri Lanka for peacekeeping operations. K initiated a hunger strike amid a militant demonstration against them, with Sashi acting as her physician. The death of K perpetually lingers in Sashi's consciousness. "K is perpetually by my side; he remains with me" (P. 247). A person she loves and desires to establish a family with. "I could assert he was merely a friend, but that would be inaccurate" (p. 247). She was overwhelmed by several thoughts. "He was murdered, on a stage, and slowly, with me beside" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 247), and she could not surmount it. It was not a sacrifice but rather a murder in which she was complicit, either directly or indirectly, with those who perpetrated the act. She is also unable to make a decision. Despite experiencing an identity crisis and being held accountable for her brother's demise, her mental health declined; yet, she persisted in her medical profession. She is unwilling to depart from this country at present. She is reluctant to choose for escape: "I desired to extricate myself from the snare this war had imposed upon me, but independently." (Page 252)

The Indian peacekeeping mission aggravates the situation and causes distress. These troops, who stood alongside their comrades, perpetrated sexual assaults against young girls. "Women traversed the town, assaulted by soldiers," a more dire period; girls could not even traverse the streets alone, "Indian soldiers, Sri Lankan soldiers—either they were fearful (Brotherless Night, 2024, pp. 265), and after being raped, they were regarded as patients who would isolate themselves from society and never recuperate from this affliction: Individuals murmured concerning the catastrophic effects of rape, cautioning that complete recovery may be unattainable (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 273). The girls were victims, yet they were regarded as the perpetrators of their circumstances. Numerous ladies endure this horror; small girls are assaulted in the presence of their brothers and mothers, pleading desperately as they comprehend their victimization. Executed the brothers of a young girl in their presence and designated them as militants. "Pain is inconsequential at this moment" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 275). Indian soldiers sexually assaulted a little girl, resulting in her bleeding upon arrival at the hospital. He begins to accuse him of the deaths of her brothers, who were slain by Indian warriors. IPKE significantly influences the life of Tamil citizens. They exacerbated their situation by assaulting the girls and murdering their brothers. Sashi departed from Jaffna, however Jaffna remained with her. She was in Colombo for a flight when the bombing incident transpired in the Colombo building, where one of the militant traitors was employed. A girl was utilized as a human bomb in that location. The same individual, SSashi,

received treatment in Jaffna Fielding Hospital, and now "soldiers and tigers have transformed her into a different person." She abruptly experienced a compulsion to return to Jaffna and "felt both solitary and a yearning for solitude (P. 287), although she was unable to return. Anjali's teacher has passed away. A militant assassinated her. "I lost someone I cherished, and there was no body" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 304). She abruptly yearns for a companion to share her thoughts, expressing, "I desired the solace of her presence" (P. 312). This conflict has resulted in the loss of numerous cherished individuals. She departed Jaffna and moved to New York, where she commenced her medical practice, however she remained cognizant of the events occurring in her homeland. She solicits assistance from the United States, yet receives none. They decline to advocate for a mere few thousand individuals. Sashi abruptly perceived herself as insignificant; she felt as though her memory had vanished; she "dropped my visitor card" (P. 325), essential for entry, yet subsequently recognized her failure to obtain standard identity (P. 325); she remained silent to everything. She was employed here and treating numerous people when they were not considering it that way. She proceeded to attend to a patient after receiving a negative response from the United States—"patient scream, and I truly did not hear anything" (P. 325). She could not forget, resulting in the demise of her own people in combat. "I don't believe in God" (Brotherless Night, 2024, p. 326) illustrates her mental illness and the transformation of her identity. Her trauma transforms her from a devout believer to an atheist as a result of her suffering. All these incidents resulted in Sashi and numerous others experiencing trauma associated with PTSD. Their struggles to initiate a new life are incessantly overwhelming. Sashi's quest for assistance illustrates her earnest desire for the restoration of her homeland. The Sri Lankan government's neglect and unrestrained endorsement of Tamils resulted in significant changes in numerous lives, including Sashi's. Tamil civilians endure the most hardship in this civil conflict. Women in the Tamil community experienced physical or psychological suffering. A devastating civil conflict impacts the identities and psychological well-being of Tamil civilians.

Conclusion

The researcher examined the text of *Brotherless Night*, which addresses the war and its context. The examination concentrated on the classification of individuals as terrorists within a nation, leading to considerable distress. This study reveals that the government's emphasis on superficiality in the face of oppression results in several fatalities and psychological anguish. This study elucidates the degree to which a nation's administration employed drastic methods to further its own objectives. Cathy's trauma theory elucidates how warfare and its atrocities inflicted trauma and obliterated the identities of many individuals. Researchers utilize Sigmund Freud's theories on fear and trauma to comprehend the impact of traumatic events on the lives of Tamils. The study illustrates the historical context of Sri Lanka and its dire circumstances, particularly for Tamil minorities: trauma, identity erosion, and the uncertain future of numerous youths. The conflict resulted in fatalities among the participants. The war concluded in 2009 with the defeat of the Tamil Tigers; nonetheless, the loss and sorrow experienced by Tamil civilians will persist indefinitely. Numerous individuals lose their siblings while Sashi endures a fractured family and haunting memories. The research also enriches the literature by evaluating trauma and identity concerns from the viewpoint of those affected by wartime experiences. The conflict resulted in the fatalities of Tamil teenagers from both factions. The LTTE and government forces became a source of distress for the Tamils, notwithstanding the LTTE's struggle for their rights and territorial autonomy. However, this mobility creates difficulties for their own kin. A significant number of girls were raped during this conflict. A significant displacement resulted in the trauma experienced by numerous individuals who emerged from this location. Sashi was the individual most impacted, suffering from nightmares, memory impairments, and a range of other PTSD-related difficulties.

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